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SHOW-PLACES.

In our 'working-day world' an important discovery has been made of late years—forced on perhaps by the very severity of our industrial application: it is, that the occasional holiday, spent in a rational manner, is an indispensable requisite for the preservation of a healthy tone of both body and mind. We have accordingly seen the increased facilities for locomotion for which our age is remarkable, taken advantage of to a great extent, for the means of making little day-excursions to such places as may be within reach, attractive from their natural beauty or any other cause. The show-place has thus risen greatly in importance in these times.

Now, show-places are of various kinds. Sometimes they are merely fine houses with pretty parks—sometimes a beautiful piece of lake-scenery—sometimes a quiet old hall or castle, of historic notability, but still occupied by a gentleman's family. In these cases, the liberty to wander about and see what is to be seen is all that can be desired; and where this has to be sought from a proprietor, and is readily granted, the public has only to conduct itself inoffensively and express its gratitudo, and it leaves us no more to say. There are, however, some show-places of a more important character, as a royal palace like Windsor or Hampton Court, full of beautiful works of art, that are worthy of careful study, or of portraits that illustrate the pages of history—or a middle-age baronial castle, like Warwick or Raby, which in an hour will give us a far more vivid idea of how the men of those days lived, than we can get from any books whatever—or a museum full of objects of natural history, or of the implements, arms, and *bijouterie* of ancient times. In such cases the public requires to be guided from object to object, and instructed in the character and history of each, and in the bearing of the whole, in order that it may have any true enjoyment of what it sees, or come away benefited by the sight. It may be in many instances sadly ill-prepared for the information it receives; but this is nothing to the purpose. We are bound to presume that a vast proportion of our holiday excursionists are reading and reflecting people, who can appreciate the objects which they see, and understand what they hear related. It will at the very least be admitted that any exposition which is afforded to the public respecting the places in question ought to be correct so far as it goes, and not calculated to confuse or mislead.

But what is the fact? We fear it stands simply thus: that the show-places of the very highest interest, and even those which may be described as of national

importance, are, with scarcely an exception, under the care of mere domestics. If we go to Windsor, we are received by some of the Queen's servants—very civil persons, it must be admitted, but yet not at all the guides we would desire through the ancient halls of the Edwards, the Henries, and the Charleses. There is enough upon the walls to excite a deep interest in any man even acquainted to the most moderate extent with the history of England. How disappointing to have it expounded by one who, although certainly a servant of a high class, and perhaps well selected for the purpose, considering the class to which she belongs, still is by education a servant, and nothing more! If we go to see the apartments of Queen Mary at Holyrood—a curiosity quite unique, and invested with historic associations of the deepest interest—we are taken in charge by a lady-like person of the character of a housekeeper, who, having received no right instruction as to the facts connected with the place, tells us a number of tales which are only fit for the nursery, and a mockery of the intelligence of the age. So far from being a guidance or a help, this old lady only mars our enjoyment of those mouldering halls. With such knowledge as we may have got from Robertson or Tytler, we could easily make out the whole story for ourselves, even to the bloody spot where Riccio lay pierced with his fifty-six wounds for the whole of a March night—it would be a high treat merely to walk quietly through the rooms, and think over the sad history which they saw enacted. But no; we have to see a set of fictitious portraits, and examine the first fire-grate ever used in Scotland, and hear a Cromwellian trooper's breast-plate and jack-boots described as accoutrements of King Henry Darnley, to the complete discomfiture of all our meditations. A person of superior education would know that all these things were only grandam's tales, and spare us. Visitors are afterwards taken to other parts of the palace by females far less endurable than our good old friend above described. In short, the exhibition of this curious place, so full of romantic associations, is on a footing which we cannot help thinking discreditable to the conductors of public affairs. Shewn by a really intelligent person, the thousands of persons who see it every week in summer would go away not merely gratified, but instructed; whereas, under present arrangements, they must all of them retire dissatisfied, if not disgusted, and with their ideas of history, such as they are, perverted. It is, unfortunately, but a specimen of the show-places of the country generally.

While performing their function so unsatisfactorily, these exhibitors and exhibitors often derive from the bounty of strangers a ridiculously large income.

A few years ago the housekeeper at a certain nobleman's seat in the west of England, remarkable for the numberless articles of *virtù* contained in it, was understood to receive as much as would amply remunerate a couple of dignified clergymen and three or four curates. The gatherings at Abbotsford were believed about the same time to equal the average income of a professor in the Edinburgh university, or of the editor of a first-class provincial newspaper. Such facts need no comment.

The largeness of these incomes, however, proves that there is no want of a disposition on the part of the public to remunerate the attendants at show-places liberally. This is a fact worth keeping in view.

On the continent there is a very different class of *ciceroni* established in the principal places resorted to by strangers. One often finds there a well-educated and gentleman-like man, fully competent to describe in a clear and intelligent manner everything he has to shew. Such is the *custode* of the Château Rosenberg at Copenhagen, where the antiquities of the royal family are kept; such is he of the historical museum of Dresden; such he of the celebrated Green Vaults of the same city. What these gentlemen tell is exactly what would be found in a respectable historical catalogue. You feel from the precision as to persons and dates that it may be depended upon every word of it. It is also told in a well-bred manner, and with the unction of an amateur, so as greatly to enhance your interest in the objects. The great museums of Germany and Italy are all under the care of such enlightened persons; and these men perform their duties in person as far as possible. At a second-rate town in Northern Italy—that of Brescia—the stranger going to see the museum established there amidst the ruins of a fine Roman temple, which was discovered a few years since, experiences a most delightful surprise when he finds that the venerable but unpretending old man who conducts him through the curiosities is actually the respected antiquarian scholar who was the means of discovering and disinterring the temple. It is quite a novelty to an Englishman to find so much intelligence both in these stationary *ciceroni*, as they may be called, and in many of those who undertake to conduct him from place to place in the large cities. Though it is almost invidious to indicate particular persons where so many are meritorious, we cannot help stating that Mr Schmidt, who lately conducted us through Berlin and Potsdam, and a certain youth named Alessandro, who acted as our *valet-de-place* in Venice, displayed a higher and more accurate intelligence than is found even amongst literary men conversant with such subjects in this country. We mention these things as shewing that there is a high standard amongst men of this class on the continent.

It occurs to us, as a thing desirable in our day, when resorting to show-places has become a luxury, nay a necessary to so many, that we should endeavour to put them upon a footing somewhat on a par with that which they present on the continent. Considering the liberality of the public at show-places, we do not see that there can be any obstacle of the kind which hinders so many good works—namely, in respect of funds. Why should not a place of the consequence of Holyrood Palace be put under the custodiership of an intelligent person, who would describe its various storied galleries and bloodstained chambers with a correct reference to facts, and with the feeling of a gentleman? Such a function might be not unworthy of even literary men of some degree of repute. Were the usual continental plan followed, of a certain respectable fee for each group of persons not exceeding a certain moderate number (it is 6s. 9d. at the Château Rosenberg for twelve or any smaller number of persons), the delicacy of the gentleman exhibitor would be sufficiently preserved. To many men of letters who

have failed by their pens to work out an independence for their old age such an office might be a succour much to be rejoiced in. We can imagine it a capital resource, in particular, for the whole of that large and respectable class of literary men who devote themselves to the investigation of local antiquities. Give one of this class a respectable subsistence from the performance of a public duty occupying him for three or four hours each forenoon, and he may be enabled to use the rest of his working-day in antiquarian investigation or in the treatment of historical subjects with his pen. Relieved from the primary cares of life, he would pursue his proper tasks with a spirit and freedom unknown to him who has to study how in the first place to make his pen profitable for the obtaining of bread. For show-places containing works of art, it might be most suitable to employ artists; and for many artists it would be equally suitable to have such situations. As to the dignity of the office, we would say, shew us respectable men filling it, and it can no longer be held as mean. Our ideas of ciceroneship can no longer be what they have been. It is a duty of more consequence than it used to be to the public. There is a need and a craving for its being performed in a superior manner. Let it be thus performed, and the public will respect those who so much gratify it, whether they have any farther claims to respect or not.

We would press these remarks on the attention of the authorities who rule such matters. Our suggestion will not, we hope, be the less acceptable that it involves a possible benefit to the literary class. It is part of the plan of the Literary Guild that the veterans receiving its patronage should do something in the way of lecturing in requital. Might they not be adapted to a more useful purpose if employed as a Band of Gentlemen Ciceroni in the places rendered attractive by historical and poetical association and by objects of taste? In the one case, we should have them interfering with the labours of the existing class of lecturers, and perhaps thrusting these persons out of a means of subsistence. In the other, we should have them displacing a set of domestics from situations for which they are obviously unfit, and who have more suitable functions to fall back upon.

RECOLLECTIONS OF A POLICE-OFFICER.

FLINT JACKSON.

FARNHAM hops are world-famous, or at least famous in that huge portion of the world where English ale is drunk, and whereon, I have a thousand times heard and read, the sun never sets. The name, therefore, of the pleasant Surrey village, in and about which the events I am about to relate occurred, is, I may fairly presume, known to many of my readers. I was ordered to Farnham, to investigate a case of burglary, committed in the house of a gentleman of the name of Hursley, during the temporary absence of the family, which had completely nonplussed the unpractised Dogberrys of the place, albeit it was not a riddle at all difficult to read. The premises, it was quickly plain to me, had been broken, not into, but out of; and a watch being set upon the motions of the very specious and clever person left in charge of the house and property, it was speedily discovered that the robbery had been effected by herself and a confederate of the name of Dawkins, her brother-in-law. Some of the stolen goods were found secreted at his lodgings; but the most valuable portion, consisting of plate, and a small quantity of jewellery, had disappeared: it had questionless been converted into money, as considerable sums, in sovereigns, were found upon both Dawkins and the woman, Sarah Purday. Now, as it had been clearly ascertained that neither of the prisoners had left Farnham since the burglary, it was manifest there was a receiver near at hand who

had purchased the missing articles. Dawkins and Purday were, however, dumb as stones upon the subject; and nothing occurred to point suspicion till early in the evening previous to the second examination of the prisoners before the magistrates, when Sarah Purday asked for pen, ink, and paper for the purpose of writing to one Mr Jackson, in whose service she had formerly lived. I happened to be at the prison, and of course took the liberty of carefully unsealing her note and reading it. It revealed nothing; and save by its extremely cautious wording, and abrupt peremptory tone, coming from a servant to her former master, suggested nothing. I had carefully reckoned the number of sheets of paper sent into the cell, and now on recounting them found that three were missing. The turnkey returned immediately, and asked for the two other letters she had written. The woman denied having written any other, and for proof pointed to the torn fragments of the missing sheets lying on the floor. These were gathered up and brought to me, but I could make nothing out of them, every word having been carefully run through with the pen, and converted into an unintelligible blot. The request contained in the actually-written letter was one simple enough in itself, merely, 'that Mr Jackson would not on any account fail to provide her, in consideration of past services, with legal assistance on the morrow.' The first nine words were strongly underlined; and I made out after a good deal of trouble that the word 'pretence' had been partially effaced, and 'account' substituted for it.

'She need not have wasted three sheets of paper upon such a nonsensical request as that,' observed the turnkey. 'Old Jackson wouldn't shell out sixpence to save her or anybody else from the gallows.'

'I am of a different opinion; but tell me, what sort of a person is this former master of hers?'

'All I know about him is that he's a cross-grained, old curmudgeon, living about a mile out of Farnham, who scrapes money together by lending small sums upon notes-of-hand at short dates, and at a thundering interest. Flint Jackson folk about here call him.'

'At all events, forward the letter at once, and to-morrow we shall see—what we shall see. Good-evening.'

It turned out as I anticipated. A few minutes after the prisoners were brought into the justice-room, a Guilford solicitor of much local celebrity arrived, and announced that he appeared for both the inculpated parties. He was allowed a private conference with them, at the close of which he stated that his clients would reserve their defence. They were at once committed for trial, and I overheard the solicitor assure the woman that the ablest counsel on the circuit would be retained in their behalf.

I had no longer a doubt that it was my duty to know something further of this suddenly generous Flint Jackson, though how to set about it was a matter of considerable difficulty. There was no legal pretence for a search-warrant, and I doubted the prudence of proceeding upon my own responsibility with so astute an old fox as Jackson was represented to be; for, supposing him to be a confederate with the burglars, he had by this time in all probability sent the stolen property away—to London in all likelihood; and should I find nothing, the consequences of ransacking his house merely because he had provided a former servant with legal assistance would be serious. Under these circumstances I wrote to headquarters for instructions, and by return of post received orders to prosecute the inquiry thoroughly, but cautiously, and to consider time as nothing so long as there appeared a chance of fixing Jackson with the guilt of receiving the plunder. Another suspicious circumstance that I have omitted to notice in its place was that the Guilford solicitor tendered bail for the prisoners to any reasonable amount, and named Enoch Jackson as one of the securities. Bail was, however, refused.

There was no need for over-hurrying the business, as the prisoners were committed to the Surrey Spring Assizes, and it was now the season of the hop-harvest—a delightful and hilarious period about Farnham when the weather is fine and the yield abundant. I, however, lost no time in making diligent and minute inquiry as to the character and habits of Jackson, and the result was a full conviction that nothing but the fear of being denounced as an accomplice could have induced such a miserly, iron-hearted rogue to put himself to charges in defence of the imprisoned burglars.

One afternoon, whilst pondering the matter, and at the same time enjoying the prettiest and cheeriest of rural sights, that of hop-picking, the apothecary at whose house I was lodging—we will call him Mr Morgan; he was a Welshman—tapped me suddenly on the shoulder, and looking sharply round, I perceived he had something he deemed of importance to communicate.

'What is it?' I said quickly.

'The oddest thing in the world. There's Flint Jackson, his deaf old woman, and the young people lodging with him, all drinking and boozing away at yon alehouse.'

'Shew them to me, if you please.'

A few minutes brought us to the place of boisterous entertainment, the lower room of which was suffocatingly full of tipplers and tobacco-smoke. We nevertheless contrived to edge ourselves in; and my companion stealthily pointed out the group, who were seated together near the farther window, and then left me to myself.

The appearance of Jackson entirely answered to the popular prefix of Flint attached to his name. He was a wiry, gnarled, heavy-browed, iron-jawed fellow of about sixty, with deep-set eyes aglow with sinister and greedy instincts. His wife, older than he, and so deaf apparently as the door of a dungeon, wore a simpering, imbecile look of wonderment, it seemed to me, at the presence of such unusual and abundant cheer. The young people, who lodged with Jackson, were really a very frank, honest, good-looking couple, though not then appearing to advantage—the countenance of Henry Rogers being flushed and inflamed with drink, and that of his wife's clouded with frowns, at the situation in which she found herself, and the riotous conduct of her husband. Their brief history was this:—They had both been servants in a family living not far distant from Farnham—Sir Thomas Lethbridge's, I understand—when about three or four months previous to the present time Flint Jackson, who had once been in an attorney's office, discovered that Henry Rogers, in consequence of the death of a distant relative in London, was entitled to property worth something like £1500. There were, however, some law-difficulties in the way, which Jackson offered, if the business was placed in his hands, to overcome for a consideration, and in the meantime to supply board and lodging and such necessary sums of money as Henry Rogers might require. With this brilliant prospect in view service became at once utterly distasteful. The fortunate legatee had for some time courted Mary Elkins, one of the ladies' maids, a pretty, bright-eyed brunette; and they were both united in the bonds of holy matrimony on the very day the 'warnings' they had given expired. Since then they had lived at Jackson's house in daily expectation of their 'fortune,' with which they proposed to start in the public line.

Finding myself unrecognised, I called boldly for a pot and a pipe, and after some manoeuvring contrived to seat myself within ear-shot of Jackson and his party. They presented a strange study. Henry Rogers was boisterously excited, and not only drinking freely himself, but treating a dozen fellows round him, the cost of which he from time to time called upon 'Old Flint,' as he courteously styled his ancient friend, to discharge.

'Come, fork out, Old Flint!' he cried again and

again. 'It'll be all right, you know, in a day or two, a few halfpence over. Shell out, old fellow! What signifies, so you're happy?'

Jackson complied with an affectation of acquiescent gaiety ludicrous to behold. It was evident that each successive pull at his purse was like wrenching a tooth out of his head, and yet while the dismalest of smiles wrinkled his wolfish mouth, he kept exclaiming: 'A fine lad—a fine lad! generous as a prince—generous as a prince! Good Lord, another round! He minds money no more than as if gold was as plentiful as gravel! But a fine generous lad for all that!'

Jackson, I perceived, drank considerably, as if incited thereto by compressed savagery. The pretty young wife would not taste a drop, but tears frequently filled her eyes, and bitterness pointed her words as she vainly implored her husband to leave the place and go home with her. To all her remonstrances the mauldin drunkard replied only by foolery, varied occasionally by an attempt at a line or two of the song of 'The Thorn.'

'But you *will* plant thorns, Henry,' rejoined the provoked wife in a louder and angrier tone than she ought perhaps to have used—'not only in my bosom, but your own, if you go on in this sottish, disgraceful way.'

'Always quarrelling, always quarrelling!' remarked Jackson, pointedly, towards the bystanders—'always quarrelling!'

'Who is always quarrelling?' demanded the young wife sharply. 'Do you mean me and Henry?'

'I was only saying, my dear, that you don't like your husband to be so generous and free-hearted—that's all,' replied Jackson, with a confidential wink at the persons near him.

'Free-hearted and generous! Fool-hearted and crazy, you mean!' rejoined the wife, who was much excited. 'And you ought to be ashamed of yourself to give him money for such brutish purposes.'

'Always quarrelling, always quarrelling!' iterated Jackson, but this time unheard by Mrs Rogers—'always, perpetually quarrelling!'

I could not quite comprehend all this. If so large a sum as £1500 was really coming to the young man, why should Jackson wince as he did at disbursing small amounts which he could repay himself with abundant interest? If otherwise—and it was probable he should not be repaid—what meant his eternal, 'fine generous lad!' 'spirited young man!' and so on? What, above all, meant that look of diabolical hate which shot out from his cavernous eyes towards Henry Rogers when he thought himself unobserved, just after satisfying a fresh claim on his purse? Much practice in reading the faces and deportment of such men made it pretty clear to me that Jackson's course of action respecting the young man and his money was not yet decided upon in his own mind; that he was still perplexed and irresolute; and hence the apparent contradiction in his words and acts.

Henry Rogers at length dropped asleep with his head upon one of the settle-tables; Jackson sank into sulky silence; the noisy room grew quiet; and I came away.

I was impressed with a belief that Jackson entertained some sinister design against his youthful and inexperienced lodgers, and I determined to acquaint them with my suspicions. For this purpose Mr Morgan, who had a patient living near Jackson's house, undertook to invite them to tea on some early evening, on the pretence that he had heard of a tavern that might suit them when they should receive their fortune. Let me confess, too, that I had another design besides putting the young people on their guard against Jackson. I thought it very probable that it would not be difficult to glean from them some interesting and suggestive particulars concerning the ways, means, practices, outgoings and incomings, of their worthy landlord's household.

Four more days passed unprofitably away, and I was becoming weary of the business, when about five o'clock in the afternoon the apothecary galloped up to his door on a borrowed horse, jumped off with surprising celerity, and with a face as white as his own magnesia, burst out as he hurried into the room where I was sitting: 'Here's a pretty kettle of fish! Henry Rogers has been poisoned, and by his wife!'

'Poisoned!'

'Yes, poisoned; although, thanks to my being on the spot, I think he will recover. But I must instantly to Dr Edwards: I will tell you all when I return.'

The promised 'all' was this: Morgan was passing slowly by Jackson's house, in the hope of seeing either Mr or Mrs Rogers, when the servant-woman, Jane Riddet, ran out and begged him to come in, as their lodger had been taken suddenly ill. Ill indeed! The surface of his body was cold as death, and the apothecary quickly discovered that he had been poisoned with sulphuric acid (oil of vitriol), a quantity of which he, Morgan, had sold a few days previously to Mrs Rogers, who, when purchasing it, said Mr Jackson wanted it to apply to some warts that annoyed him. Morgan fortunately knew the proper remedy, and desired Jackson, who was in the room, and seemingly very anxious and flurried, to bring some soap instantly, a solution of which he proposed to give immediately to the seemingly dying man. The woman-servant was gone to find Mrs Rogers, who had left about ten minutes before, having first made the tea in which the poison had been taken. Jackson hurried out of the apartment, but was gone so long that Morgan, becoming impatient, scraped a quantity of plaster off the wall, and administered it with the best effect. At last Jackson came back, and said there was unfortunately not a particle of soap in the house. A few minutes afterwards the young wife, alarmed at the woman-servant's tidings, flew into the room in an agony of alarm and grief. Simulated alarm, crocodile grief, Mr Morgan said; for there could, in his opinion, be no doubt that she had attempted to destroy her husband. Mr Jackson, on being questioned, peremptorily denied that he had ever desired Mrs Rogers to procure sulphuric acid for him, or had received any from her—a statement which so confounded the young woman that she instantly fainted. The upshot was that Mrs Rogers was taken into custody and lodged in prison.

This terrible news flew through Farnham like wildfire. In a few minutes it was upon everybody's tongue: the hints of the quarrelsome life the young couple led, artfully spread by Jackson, were recalled, and no doubt appeared to be entertained of the truth of the dreadful charge. I had no doubt either, but my conviction was not that of the Farnham folk. This, then, was the solution of the struggle I had seen going on in Jackson's mind; this the realisation of the dark thoughts which I had imperfectly read in the sinister glances of his restless eyes. He had intended to destroy both the husband and wife—the one by poison, and the other by the law! Doubtless, then, the £1500 had been obtained, and this was the wretched man's infernal device for retaining it! I went over with Morgan early the next morning to see the patient, and found that, thanks to the prompt antidote administered, and Dr Edwards's subsequent active treatment, he was rapidly recovering. The still-suffering young man, I was glad to find, would not believe for a moment in his wife's guilt. I watched the looks and movements of Jackson attentively—a scrutiny which he, now aware of my vocation, by no means appeared to relish.

'Pray,' said I, suddenly addressing Riddet, the woman-servant—'pray, how did it happen that you had no soap in such a house as this yesterday evening?'

'No soap!' echoed the woman with a stare of surprise. 'Why—'

'No—no soap,' hastily broke in her master with loud and menacing emphasis. 'There was not a morsel in the house. I bought some afterwards in Farnham.'

The cowed and bewildered woman slunk away. I was more than satisfied; and judging by Jackson's countenance, which changed beneath my look to the colour of the lime-washed wall against which he stood, he surmised that I was.

My conviction, however, was not evidence, and I felt that I should need even more than my wonted good-fortune to bring the black crime home to the real perpetrator. For the present, at all events, I must keep silence—a resolve I found hard to persist in at the examination of the accused wife, an hour or two afterwards, before the county magistrates. Jackson had hardened himself to iron, and gave his lying evidence with ruthless self-possession. He had *not* desired Mrs Rogers to purchase sulphuric acid; had *not* received any from her. In addition also to his testimony that she and her husband were always quarrelling, it was proved by a respectable person that high words had passed between them on the evening previous to the day the criminal offence was committed, and that foolish, passionate expressions had escaped her about wishing to be rid of such a drunken wretch. This evidence, combined with the medical testimony, appeared so conclusive to the magistrates, that spite of the unfortunate woman's wild protestations of innocence, and the rending agony which convulsed her frame, and almost choked her utterance, she was remanded to prison till that day—week, when, the magistrates informed her, she would be again brought up for the merely formal completion of the depositions, and be then fully committed on the capital charge.

I was greatly disturbed, and walked for two or three hours about the quiet neighbourhood of Farnham, revolving a hundred fragments of schemes for bringing the truth to light, without arriving at any feasible conclusion. One only mode of procedure seemed to offer, and that but dimly, a hope of success. It was, however, the best I could hit upon, and I directed my steps towards the Farnham prison. Sarah Purday had not yet, I remembered, been removed to the county jail at Guilford.

'Is Sarah Purday,' I asked the turnkey, 'more reconciled to her position than she was?'

'She's just the same—bitter as gall, and venomous as a viper.'

This woman, I should state, was a person of fierce will and strong passions, and in early life had been respectably situated.

'Just step into her cell,' I continued, 'upon some excuse or other, and carelessly drop a hint that if she could prevail upon Jackson to get her brought by *habeas* before a judge in London, there could be no doubt of her being bailed.'

The man stared, but after a few words of pretended explanation, went off to do as I requested. He was not long gone. 'She's all in a twitteration at the thoughts of it,' he said; 'and must have pen, ink, and paper without a moment's delay, bless her consequence!'

These were supplied; and I was soon in possession of her letter, couched cautiously, but more peremptorily than the former one. I need hardly say it did not reach its destination. She passed the next day in a state of feverish impatience; and no answer returning, wrote again, her words this time conveying an evident though indistinct threat. I refrained from visiting her till two days had thus passed, and found her, as I expected, eaten up with fury. She glared at me as I entered the cell like a chained tigress.

'You appear vexed,' I said, 'no doubt because Jackson declines to get you bailed. He ought not to refuse you such a trifling service, considering all things.'

'All what things?' replied the woman, eyeing me fiercely.

'That you know best, though I have a shrewd guess.' 'What do you guess? and what are you driving at?'

'I will deal frankly with you, Sarah Purday. In the first place, you must plainly perceive that your friend Jackson has cast you off—abandoned you to your fate; and that fate will, there can be no doubt, be transportation.'

'Well,' she impatiently snarled, 'suppose so; what then?'

'This—that you can help yourself in this difficulty by helping me.'

'As how?'

'In the first place, give me the means of convicting Jackson of having received the stolen property.'

'Ha! How do you know that?'

'Oh, I know it very well—as well almost as you do. But this is not my chief object; there is another, far more important one, and I ran over the incidents relative to the attempt at poisoning. 'Now,' I resumed, 'tell me, if you will, your opinion on this matter.'

'That it was Jackson administered the poison, and certainly not the young woman,' she replied with vengeful promptness.

'My own conviction! This, then, is my proposition: you are sharp-witted, and know this fellow's ways, habits, and propensities thoroughly—I, too, have heard something of them—and it strikes me that you could suggest some plan, some device grounded on that knowledge, whereby the truth might come to light.'

The woman looked fixedly at me for some time without speaking. As I meant fairly and honestly by her I could bear her gaze without shrinking.

'Supposing I could assist you,' she at last said, 'how would that help me?'

'It would help you greatly. You would no doubt be still convicted of the burglary, for the evidence is irresistible; but if in the meantime you should have been instrumental in saving the life of an innocent person, and of bringing a great criminal to justice, there cannot be a question that the Queen's mercy would be extended to you, and the punishment be merely a nominal one.'

'If I were sure of that!' she murmured with a burning scrutiny in her eyes, which were still fixed upon my countenance—if I were sure of that! But you are misleading me.'

'Believe me, I am not. I speak in perfect sincerity. Take time to consider the matter. I will look in again in about an hour; and pray, do not forget that it is your sole and last chance.'

I left her, and did not return till more than three hours had passed away. Sarah Purday was pacing the cell in a frenzy of inquietude.

'I thought you had forgotten me. Now,' she continued with rapid vehemence, 'tell me, on your word and honour as a man, do you truly believe that if I can effectually assist you it will avail me with Her Majesty?'

'I am as positive it will as I am of my own life.'

'Well, then, I will assist you. First, then, Jackson was a confederate with Dawkins and myself, and received the plate and jewellery, for which he paid us less than one-third of the value.'

'Rogers and his wife were not, I hope, cognizant of this?'

'Certainly not; but Jackson's wife and the woman-servant, Riddet, were. I have been turning the other business over in my mind,' she continued, speaking with increasing emotion and rapidity; 'and oh, believe me, Mr Waters, if you can, that it is not solely a selfish motive which induces me to aid in saving Mary Rogers from destruction. I was once myself—Ah God!'

Tears welled up to the fierce eyes, but they were quickly brushed away, and she continued somewhat

more calmly: 'You have heard, I daresay, that Jackson has a strange habit of talking in his sleep?'

'I have, and that he once consulted Morgan as to whether there was any cure for it. It was that which partly suggested—'

'It is, I believe, a mere fancy of his,' she interrupted; 'or at anyrate the habit is not so frequent, nor what he says so intelligible, as he thoroughly believes and fears it, from some former circumstance, to be. His deaf wife cannot undeceive him, and he takes care never even to doze except in her presence only.'

'This is not, then, so promising as I hoped.'

'Have patience. It is full of promise, as we will manage. Every evening Jackson frequents a low gambling-house, where he almost invariably wins small sums at cards—by craft, no doubt, as he never drinks there. When he returns home at about ten o'clock, his constant habit is to go into the front-parlour, where his wife is sure to be sitting at that hour. He carefully locks the door, helps himself to brandy and water—plentifully of late—and falls asleep in his arm-chair; and there they both doze away, sometimes till one o'clock—always till past twelve.'

'Well; but I do not see how—'

'Hear me out, if you please. Jackson never wastes a candle to drink or sleep by, and at this time of the year there will be no fire. If he speaks to his wife he does not expect her, from her wooden deafness, to answer him. Do you begin to perceive my drift?'

'Upon my word, I do not.'

'What; if upon awaking, Jackson finds that his wife is Mr Waters, and that Mr Waters relates to him all that he has disclosed in his sleep: that Mr Hursley's plate is buried in the garden near the lilac-tree; that he, Jackson, received a thousand pounds six weeks ago of Henry Rogers's fortune, and that the money is now in the recess on the top-landing, the key of which is in his breast-pocket; that he was the receiver of the plate stolen from a house in the close at Salisbury a twelve-month ago, and sold in London for four hundred and fifty pounds. All this hurled at him,' continued the woman with wild energy and flashing eyes, 'what else might not a bold, quick-witted man make him believe he had confessed, revealed in his brief sleep?'

I had been sitting on a bench; but as these rapid disclosures burst from her lips, and I saw the use to which they might be turned, I rose slowly and in some sort involuntarily to my feet, lifted up, as it were, by the energy of her fiery words.

'God reward you!' I exclaimed, shaking both her hands in mine. 'You have; unless I blunder, rescued an innocent woman from the scaffold. I see it all. Farewell!'

'Mr Waters,' she exclaimed, in a changed, palpitating voice, as I was passing forth; 'when all is done, you will not forget me?'

'That I will not, by my own hopes of mercy in the hereafter. Adieu!'

At a quarter past nine that evening I, accompanied by two Farnham constables, knocked at the door of Jackson's house. Henry Rogers, I should state, had been removed to the village. The door was opened by the woman-servant, and we went in. 'I have a warrant for your arrest, Jane Riddet,' I said, 'as an accomplice in the plate-stealing the other day. There, don't scream, but listen to me.' I then intimated the terms upon which alone she could expect favour. She tremblingly promised compliance; and after placing the constables outside, in concealment, but within hearing, I proceeded to the parlour, secured the terrified old woman, and confined her safely in a distant out-house.

'Now, Riddet,' I said, 'quick with one of the old lady's gowns, a shawl, cap, *etcetera*.' These were brought, and I returned to the parlour. It was a roomy apartment, with small, diamond-paned windows, and just then but very faintly illuminated by the star-light.

There were two large high-backed easy-chairs, and I prepared to take possession of the one recently vacated by Jackson's wife. 'You must perfectly understand,' were my parting words to the trembling servant, 'that we intend standing no nonsense with either you or your master. You cannot escape; but if you let Mr Jackson in as usual, and he enters this room as usual, no harm will befall you: if otherwise, you will be unquestionably transported. Now, go.'

My toilet was not so easily accomplished as I thought it would be. The gown did not meet at the back by about a foot; that, however, was of little consequence, as the high chair concealed the deficiency; neither did the shortness of the sleeves matter much, as the ample shawl could be made to hide my too great length of arm; but the skirt was scarcely lower than a Highlander's, and how the deuce I was to crook my booted legs up out of view, even in that gloomy starlight, I could hardly imagine. The cap also was far too small; still, with an ample kerchief in my hand, my whiskers might, I thought, be concealed. I was still fidgeting with these arrangements when Jackson knocked at his door. The servant admitted him without remark, and he presently entered the room, carefully locked the door, and jolted down, so to speak, in the fellow easy-chair to mine.

He was silent for a few moments, and then he bawled out: 'She'll swing for it, they say—swing for it, d'ye hear, dame? But no, of course she don't—dearer and dearer, dearer and dearer every day. It'll be a precious good job when the parson says his last prayers over her as well as others.'

He then got up, and went to a cupboard. I could hear—for I dared not look up—by the jingling of glasses and the outpouring of liquids that he was helping himself to his spirituous sleeping-draughts. He reseated himself, and drank in moody silence, except now and then muttering drowsily to himself, but in so low a tone that I could make nothing out of it save an occasional curse or blasphemy. It was nearly eleven o'clock before the muttered self-communing ceased, and his heavy head sank upon the back of the easy-chair. He was very restless, and it was evident that even his sleeping brain laboured with affrighting and oppressive images; but the mutterings, as before he slept, were confused and indistinct. At length—half an hour had perhaps thus passed—the troubled moanings became for a few moments clearly audible. 'Ha—ha—ha!' he burst out, 'how are you off for soap? Ho—ho! done there, my boy; ha—ha! But no—no. Wall-plaster! Who could have thought it? But for that I—I—What do you stare at me so for, you infernal blue-bottle? You—you!' Again the dream-utterance sank into indistinctness, and I comprehended nothing more.

About half-past twelve o'clock he awoke, rose, stretched himself, and said: 'Come, dame, let's to bed; it's getting chilly here.'

'Dame' did not answer, and he again went towards the cupboard. 'Here's a candle-end will do for us,' he muttered. A lucifer-match was drawn across the wall, he lit the candle, and stumbled towards me, for he was scarcely yet awake. 'Come, dame, come! Why, thee beast sleeping like a dead un! Wake up, will thee—Ah! murder! thieves! mur!—

My grasp was on the wretch's throat; but there was no occasion to use force: he recognised me, and nerveless, paralysed, sank on the floor incapable of motion much less of resistance, and could only gaze in my face in dumb affright and horror.

'Give me the key of the recess up stairs, which you carry in your breast-pocket. In your sleep, unhappy man, you have revealed everything.'

An inarticulate shriek of terror replied to me. I was silent; and presently he gasped: 'Wha—at, what have I said?'

'That Mr Hursley's plate is buried in the garden by the lilac-tree; that you have received a thousand pounds belonging to the man you tried to poison; that you netted four hundred and fifty pounds by the plate stolen at Salisbury; that you dexterously contrived to slip the sulphuric acid into the tea unseen by Henry Rogers's wife.'

The shriek or scream was repeated, and he was for several moments speechless with consternation. A ray of hope gleamed suddenly in his flaming eyes. 'It is true—it is true!' he hurriedly ejaculated; 'useless—useless—useless to deny it. But you are alone, and poor, poor, no doubt. A thousand pounds!—more, more than that: two thousand pounds in gold—gold, all in gold—I will give you to spare me, to let me escape!'

'Where did you hide the soap on the day when you confess you tried to poison Henry Rogers?'

'In the recess you spoke of. But think! Two thousand pounds in gold—all in gold!—'

As he spoke, I suddenly grasped the villain's hands, pressed them together, and in another instant the snapping of a handcuff pronounced my answer. A yell of anguish burst from the miserable man, so loud and piercing, that the constables outside hurried to the outer-door, and knocked hastily for admittance. They were let in by the servant-woman; and in half an hour afterwards the three prisoners—Jackson, his wife, and Jane Riddet—were safe in Farnham prison.

A few sentences will conclude this narrative. Mary Rogers was brought up on the following day, and, on my evidence, discharged. Her husband, I have heard, has since proved a better and a wiser man. Jackson was convicted at the Guilford assize of guiltily receiving the Hursley plate, and sentenced to transportation for life. This being so, the graver charge of attempting to poison was not pressed. There was no moral doubt of his guilt; but the legal proof of it rested solely on his own hurried confession, which counsel would no doubt have contended ought not to be received. His wife and the servant were leniently dealt with.

Sarah Purday was convicted, and sentenced to transportation. I did not forget my promise; and a statement of the previously-narrated circumstances having been drawn up and forwarded to the Queen and the Home Secretary, a pardon, after some delay, was issued. There were painful circumstances in her history which, after strict inquiry, told favourably for her. Several benevolent persons interested themselves in her behalf, and she was sent out to Canada, where she had some relatives, and has, I believe, prospered there.

This affair caused considerable hubbub at the time, and much admiration was expressed by the country people at the boldness and dexterity of the London 'runner'; whereas, in fact, the successful result was entirely attributable to the opportune revelations of Sarah Purday.

THE DROLLERIES OF FALSE POLITICAL ECONOMY.

FIRST ARTICLE.

ONE of the last things which a people learn is to allow matters of trade and commerce to take their natural course. Imagining that prosperity may be insured by certain regulations as to buying and selling, importing and exporting, manufacturing this and preventing the manufacture of that—rearing up, as it were, a wholly factitious system of affairs—they make laws accordingly, and only find out, after doing a world of mischief, that they had much better have let things alone. Not, indeed, till the more thoughtful part of the community has arrived at this conviction, is the fair current of demand and supply permitted to take its course; and

even at the very last there are individuals who prophesy all sorts of disasters by withdrawing restrictions. Books could be filled with tales of impoverishment and ruin, of contests and jealousies, all caused by meddling with the ordinary desires of mankind to buy and sell, to eat and drink, or to dress as they liked. Now that this species of folly is pretty well understood and laughed at, we propose, for general amusement, to run over a few of the more remarkable instances of erroneous political economy, in other countries as well as our own. They form a strange chapter in the history of social blunders.

We may begin by mentioning that ancient Rome, amidst all her glories, had taken care, through sheer ignorance of right principle, to insure her national ruin. The plan of prosperity ingeniously contrived by the Romans consisted in making the colonies they conquered find them in food; in which respect they may be said to have acted the part of a band of robbers who lived on the plunder of industrious neighbours. Common-sense tells us that practices of this kind cannot last for ever. Dishonesty, in its very acts, undermines what it rests on. Thinking, however, that they had laid hold of a capital plan for living in comfort without labour, they compelled the unfortunate colonists to supply Rome with a certain tribute in grain. The state, as well as the great men, thus acquired vast stores of food, which was distributed gratuitously to the people. Becoming accustomed to these doles, the humbler classes did not think of working for a subsistence, and gradually the native soil went out of cultivation. In a word, agriculture was ruined, independence of spirit was gone, and abject, corrupt, and impoverished, the empire at length sunk under the attacks of energetic invaders. Such was the political economy of the ancient Romans, a wonderfully great people in some things, but utterly ignorant of the mighty truth—that without well-directed industry the most potent system must decay and perish.

The sad history of Spain supplies us with perhaps a still more palpable instance of a great empire being ruined by unsound political economy. On the accession of Philip II. in the middle of the sixteenth century, and during most of his reign, Spain was a great nation. Her navies swept the seas till their pride was tamed in the British Channel by the rising energy of the nation which was to snatch from her the sceptre of the seas. She had vast possessions stretching over Europe; and the Indies, as North and South America were called, were treated as the property of the Spanish crown—a sort of domain full of incalculable riches to be poured into the lap of the parent state. It may be said, however, that it was particularly the possession of the gold mines of South America that dazzled the eyes of the government, and made it frantic and foolish with pride. Political economy teaches us that bullion is but a commodity like others, which may be a means of trading and creating riches, but is not in itself riches, save in so far as it may command other commodities. A Californian digger, with a lump of gold in his possession, seated on the top of a mountain, and unable to find his way to a store or any place where he can exchange it for other objects, is a very poor man in comparison with the blacksmith at his forge making a good living with his stock of iron. But the Spanish government fell into the mistake that bullion was in itself riches. They deemed it the end for which all mankind toiled and speculated, bought and sold; and

this being within the boundaries of their own territories, they deemed that there was now no need for them to toil and speculate, and buy and sell. A decree was issued prohibiting the exportation of the precious metals: they were to be kept at home for the enrichment of the country. It had just such an effect as if an act of parliament were to be passed prohibiting the exportation of cotton-manufactures and cutlery from this country. The bullion extracted from the American mines was just a commodity suitable for trade—not so profitable a commodity as cotton-manufactures and cutlery, but still it was the commodity which Spain especially possessed, and she ought to have sought and cultivated the means of following out a good trade in connection with it. Instead of encouraging, her government hampered and intercepted her legitimate trade, and the natural consequences followed. The people became idle, and, being idle, they became poor, notwithstanding the gold mines. These, it is true, sent over their tribute. Despite of the utmost vigilance of the government, a considerable portion of it found its way abroad, much to the relief of the country, which was subject to a topical plethora of gold. Portions of this wealth were seized by Drake and the English cruisers, whose half-piratical captures did little harm to the people of Spain beyond the humiliation they inflicted. In fact, the bullion indicated the national degradation most effectually when it found its way, as the greater part of it did, to the palaces of the nobility. Such a contrast of wealth and poverty let us hope the world may never shew again. A Spanish noble would possess a sideboard with forty silver ladders, by which his slaves mounted to carry down dishes of gold and silver, which would be valued in the present day at £40,000 or £50,000. Yet in the midst of this grandeur there prevailed squalid misery, rags, and starvation. On golden dishes there was not a morsel to eat; the owner was without the means of buying a dinner; he was as poor in the possession of bullion which he could not dispose of as an Irish or Highland landlord with a large estate for which he receives no rent. It was noted by travellers in Spain in the seventeenth century that some of these magnificent grandees could not obtain so humble a product of foreign industry as a glass-window.

The public treasury of Spain was like the grandees' houses. Abundance of bullion was there about the court, but no money in the royal coffers to keep up the army and navy, and pay the debts of the state. It was not difficult to compel the mines to yield gold enough to make the palace glitter, but it was impossible to draw wealth from an idle people. The shifts of the kings of Spain to avoid paying their debts are almost as ludicrous as those of Beau Brummell. The electors of Brandenburg, the ancestors of the kings of Prussia, were always somewhat renowned for the keenness with which they looked after their pecuniary interests. Among a crowd of creditors who from morning to night beset the court of Charles II., the elector's representative was the most importunate, and it was desirable to get rid of him. He was told that a cargo of bullion was to arrive from America at Seville, and received an order for payment of his claim on the municipality of that city. Away went the ambassador, but in the meantime a counter-order was sent to the municipality not to give up the money, and he found himself duped. But his master was not a man to be trifled with; so, using the order in an extended sense, he hired a parcel of privateers or pirate vessels, and seizing on the next cargo of bullion proceeding from

America to Spain, paid himself. Selden mentions as a curious illustration of English law, how a London merchant got payment of a debt from the king of Spain. The merchant proceeded against him in the English courts in the ordinary form, and as the debtor did not choose to make appearance or plead, the conclusive ceremony of outlawry was performed. It appears that the preliminary step to this denunciation was an inquiry after the debtor in all neighbouring alehouses, these being presumed to be the places where those who owe money do most resort. Selden gives a ludicrous account of the inquiry at each alehouse if the king of Spain were there, and the formal return of a universal negative by the officer; whereupon, in usual form, outlawry was pronounced against him. In the end this was found to be no joke. While the sentence of outlawry stood against him, none of his subjects could recover debts in the English courts, which were closed to the whole Spanish nation, and in the end the London merchant was paid his debt. Mr Dunlop, in his 'Memoirs of Spain,' when describing the state of the national treasury in the reign of Charles II., says: 'Such was the inconceivable penury to which it was reduced, that it was found as difficult to procure fifty ducats as 50,000. Money could thus be no longer raised for the most pressing occasions, however trifling might be the cost. Couriers charged with urgent and important dispatches on affairs of state, were often unable to quit Madrid for want of the funds necessary to defray the immediate expenses of their journeys. Some officers of the royal household having waited for payment of what was due to them as long as they could without absolutely reducing themselves to beggary, peremptorily demanded their dismissal, and were only retained by force and menaces. All the grooms, however, belonging to the royal stables who had not received their rations or wages for two years, contrived to escape from their service, and the horses remained for some time uncurried and unfed. A table which had been kept up at the king's cost for the gentlemen of the bedchamber was now totally unsupplied, and money was even frequently wanting to defray the daily expenses of the board of a monarch who was master of Mexico and Peru! The household of the queen-mother, which had hitherto been kept at its full establishment, now began to feel the effects of the general destitution. The rations provided for her domestics were withheld; and on lodging their complaints at court, they were told, with a sort of Cervantine humour, that the royal coffers were now all standing open, and they might come to supply themselves.'

The sources of all wealth are industry and unrestricted commercial enterprise. Could there be better evidence of this than the beggarly poverty of a state which possessed the richest gold-mines in the world?—a poverty produced by tamperings and restrictions which paralysed trade. Of course many inquiries were made as to the reason why the realm of gold and silver was thus destitute, while a small republic like Holland, seated in the mire, was growing rich. Some foreign engineers proposed to make a great navigable canal to promote internal trade, but they were answered that Providence had already provided rivers for that purpose, and they were doubtless sufficient. This view was a curious contrast to the notion of the enterprising, restless engineer Brindley, who would not admit that rivers were of any value except as feeders to navigable canals. Philip IV.'s government made inquiries into the causes of the misery and poverty of the nation, and desired counsel from the governors of provinces and others as to a suitable remedy. One man named Leruela suggested a plan founded on the view that, notwithstanding the riches of the American mines, the people were still in some degree doomed to labour, especially in the production of food. To relieve them as much as possible from the exhaustion of labour, it was proposed that

the government should pass a law to discourage agriculture and promote pasture, which provided food and clothing for the people without exhausting them by labour.

RAMBLES IN SEARCH OF WILD-FLOWERS.

NOVEMBER.

I CAN fancy some of my readers saying: 'What can there be to say about wild-flowers in November?—the blossoms are getting nipped in the hedgerows and meadows, and few if any new ones rise up to take their places; the trees begin to drop their leaves, and the copses are becoming touched with the tints of autumn: all vegetation seems to be decaying, and winter will soon be here.' This is all very true; yet autumn is a lovely season, and to a thinking mind one full of fruitful thoughts and poetical associations and fancies. They are not necessarily sad thoughts which attend on the decaying season, although they would be so if there were no spring-tide to which we could look forward with hope; neither are those necessarily sad thoughts which attend on the decay of life, though they would be so had we not that joyful resurrection, of which the spring is ever a type, whereon to rest our hopes.

It is a lovely season; and though we find few flowers, there are, nevertheless, other things which make our country-walks delightful, and give us ample scope for research into subjects which will well repay us for our trouble. The many-tinted leaves of the bramble, and the glowing, clustering berries of the rose, hawthorn, honeysuckle, and that most exquisitely brilliant kind, the fruit of the wild guelder-rose (*Viburnum opulus*), tempt you to overload your hands with their heavy bunches, which, mixed with wreaths of ivy and other evergreens, make bouquets for your side-tables which might vie with the gems of summer in brightness and beauty—'and scent?' some will say. No, not in scent; you must do without perfume in your autumn and winter nosegays, and be thankful that you have bright things to look at, and, not expecting every pleasure at once, wait patiently and hopefully.

'Till the spring's first gale
Comes forth to tell us where the violets lie.'

But now let me invite you to walk with me to Otterton Park; and do not be alarmed by the name, and fancy that I am going to lead you to some stately mansion-house, rising in dignity amidst lofty trees, with a fine ancient park, and herds of dappled deer congregating beneath oaks of the growth of centuries: it is no such place; for though there are indeed fine old oaks, and abundant magnificent groups of forest-trees, which may once have decked the precincts of a gentleman's grounds, Otterton Park is now only the name bestowed on a beautiful tract of hill, copse, and upland pasture, which rises above the pretty river Otter near the village of Otterton, and is as lovely a wild spot as you would wish to see. I set out early in the day, because at so late a season of the year it is always wise to secure your exercise, and follow your out-door pursuit while the sun is at the highest: it was a lovely morning, the sea sparkling in the sun-beams; and as I pursued my former course down the beach-walk, and over by the limekiln-cliff and the granary, I was amused by watching the immense flocks of larks which frequent these parts throughout the year, but especially in the winter months; and by gathering a few of the late blossoms of the pretty little bugloss (*Lycopsis arvensis*)—a rough, bristly plant about a foot high, with a funnel-shaped corolla of the

brightest sky-blue, with white valves; and here and there a sea-pink, which still lingered on its turf bed. Everything glitters with dew, and the gossamer spider has not been idle, for on every hedge and field lie its wonderfully beautiful webs, which have ensnared myriads of little spheres of dew, into which the sun freely pours those beams which will in time dissipate their structure and dissolve them into thin air. And now, only marking these bright objects as I pass quickly on, I wend my way along by the embankment without much lingering, for my business lies farther on beyond the river, and no new flowers tempt me to turn from my course; so on I go, and cross the now brimming river (for the water, usually so low, is now raised by the tide to a level with its grassy banks) by a broken wooden bridge, and pursue the path to the left up a rough stony bit, somewhat intersected by mud-pools, and through some pleasant sloping fields to the Park; the hedges and fields being still adorned with varieties of ragworts (*Senecio*), exhibiting their star-shaped yellow flowers, of the natural order *Composita*; and the pretty eyebright (*Euphrasia officinalis*), its gaping white corolla, streaked with purple and yellow on the palate; and here and there bright patches of the lovely pink centaury (*Erythraea centaurium*), which is never seen in beauty except when the brightest beams of the sun are full on it, and which, lovely as it is, you may try in vain to make useful in forming an ornament to your nosegay of wild-flowers, as a few minutes after you gather it you find its bright-yellow anthers covered in by its pretty pink petals, which close tightly over them, reminding one of wayward, shy children, who refuse to shew off any of those pretty ways which have delighted their admiring parents when most wished to do so, and shut themselves up in baby reserve, speechlessly hanging down their heads the moment a stranger appears. The rise had been gradual, though constant, from the edge of the river to the point I had now attained, so that when I approached a belt of underwood overhung by fine trees, which skirted the field in which I was on the left hand, I was surprised to find myself standing on the edge of a rather abrupt cliff of red sandstone, of very considerable height and great beauty. These lofty and rocky banks are characteristic of the Otter, and mark several parts of its course, especially near Ottery St Mary, where the scenery is very beautiful.

The colouring spread over this cliff in the autumnal season is such as baffles description; the rich green of the ivy being contrasted with the red sandstone, and intermixed with every varied hue, from the tinted leaves, purple, scarlet, yellow, and every shade of green, splendid trees of holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and butcher-broom (*Ruscus aculeatus*), with shining leaves and brilliant scarlet berries, besides numerous other berries and fruits, and high tufts of ferns, presenting a wonderful variety of tints. Far below are the calm waters of the river reflecting all this woodland scenery, and gliding on as gently between their flowery banks as if they had miles of their course to run, instead of being, as they are in fact, within a few minutes of reaching that 'last bourne' the sea, in whose great deep they would speedily be lost, not to emerge from it save in vapours—which, ascending to the clouds, would be again scattered over the face of the land in rain-drops, possibly some of them to refresh those very herbs and trees below which it is now pursuing its murmuring course.

There are fishermen below, and young children sporting in the green meadow, and enjoying the half-wintry air, which, though it is November, is bright and warm with sunshine; and watching all this as the openings here and there between the trees reveal it to me, I pursue my path, occasionally diving down a little way among the thickets to secure some treasure, and then wandering over the fields to see what I can find there. But now, before I enter on the details of what I did

find, I must say a few words about a class of plants which, though little known or noticed, is of immense extent and considerable interest, including under its different families literally innumerable species, occupying every imaginable habitat, and presenting wonderful varieties in its structure. The individuals of this class of plants vary in size from objects barely distinguishable by the aid of powerful lenses, to huge masses as large as a man's head—nay, much larger. They are of every form and every hue, from sooty black to the most delicate white, ranging through ruby, orange, lilac, green, pink, yellow, and a thousand modifications of these and other colours. In some instances they are important edibles; in others, they fix themselves on the staple articles of food, and eat out their life and substance. Some of them are highly medicinal, and others deadly poison; and yet these wonderful samples of the great Creator's handiwork are, with few exceptions, passed by unknown and unnoticed by man! In England so great is this neglect, that I question whether one out of ten who may read this paper will know that I allude to the fungus tribe.

Hooker thus describes this order: 'The lowest in the scale of vegetables, yet very variable in appearance, growing on the ground, or parasitic on other vegetable substances—rarely if ever aquatic, and scarcely ever green. . . . In the larger sense of the word the whole plant may be considered fructification, since distinct from it there is no true stem. There are no branches, no leaves.' Among other habitats in which we find fungi are earth, moss, trunks of trees either dead or living, fir-cones, cow-dung, dead and living leaves, fruit, stems of mosses, and other fungi. They are also to be found on cheese, bread, and other articles of prepared food, as well as on wheat—the rust in wheat and many other blights being congregated plants of this order, so minute, indeed, as to be invisible separately, yet so numerous as to destroy the crops. All mildew is formed of fungi, from the pretty feathery tufts of snow-white fur which we see on casks and in damp cellars, to the pale-gray or brown marks which deface the paper-hangings in a room where damp prevails. In fact, this tribe of plants appears in so many places and in so many forms, that it would be impossible for me to notice a tenth part of them. Loudon tells us that in Sweden, in the small space of a square furlong, where the plants of all other kinds, including mosses and lichens, did not exceed 850 species, Fries discovered more than 2000 species of fungi. In Russia, and other northern countries, some of the different varieties of fungus form important articles of diet, and many kinds which are with us considered poisonous are there freely eaten; but in England, with the exception of mushrooms, truffles, morels, and a few others, the whole tribe is voted useless as an article of food, though a few kinds are used medicinally, and for other purposes. Galen's opinion of fungi is thus quaintly given by Gerard:—'Galen affirms that they are all very cold and moist, and therefore do approach unto a cold and murthering facultie, and engender a clammy, pituitous, and cold nutriment if they be eaten. To conclude, few of them be good to be eaten, and most of them do suffocate and strangle the eater; therefore I give my advice to those that love such strange, newe-fangled meates, to beware of licking honey among thornes, least the sweetnes of the one do not countervale the sharpnes and pricking of the other.'

'The meadowe mushrooms are in kinde the best;
It is ill trusting any of the rest.'

so adds old Gerard, with more sense than harmony of metre. But now let us look about us, and see whether we cannot collect a few of the more beautiful species of a size that may be seen and handled.

A few days before the time of my walk to Otterton

I had rambled in another direction, intruding into a plantation in which, strictly speaking, I had no right; and suddenly, while looking about for flowers, happened on a most splendid sight: under the shade of some pines, and elevated on a grassy bank which overhung a gravel-pit, I discovered a group of the most magnificent fungi I had ever seen. Some of the younger and smaller ones were about the size of an orange, and others extended to a much larger size. They were of a rich carmine hue, and shining, spotted over with large snow-white *warts*, and raised on a snowy stem of about two inches in height. The elder specimens varied in colour from carmine to deep orange red, these being also warted on the surface of the cap, or *pileus*, as it is called. In the young ones, the delicate fringe which connects the stem of plants of this form with the cap was unbroken, and of snowy whiteness; but in the elder and more matured ones it was broken, and become yellowish and scaly. In some of these the cap was six or seven inches across, and the stem three or four inches in height; the veil being broken, the gills, of a pale-yellowish hue, and some of them not reaching nearly from the stem to the edge of the cap, were discovered. It was altogether quite a gorgeous display—for the ground was thickly studded with them—and one so new to me as to inflame me with a fungus mania. I collected several of the most beautiful, and on my return home covered a large china plate with some of the white Lapland moss, mixed with the pale-green bog-moss; and selecting one of my most magnificent specimens, placed it in the centre, with a few other kinds which I had discovered in the same plantation round it: my main object in going to Otterton was to endeavour to find more varieties with which to complete my singular but exquisitely lovely table-ornament. My much-prized discovery I found to be the fly-blown mushroom (*Agaricus muscarius*), a highly-poisonous species, used in northern countries to destroy flies and bugs; it is the *mocho-more* of the Russians, &c. who use it for intoxication. Loudon tells us that when they drink a liquor made with this and the epilobium, they are 'seized with convulsions in all their limbs, followed with that kind of raving which attends a burning fever. They personify this mushroom; and if they are urged by its effects to suicide or any dreadful crime, they pretend to obey its commands. To fit themselves for premeditated assassination they recur to the use of the mocho-more.'

The first fungi I discovered at Otterton I did not at once perceive to be such. They were globular, of a pure ruby hue, and as I saw them lying in clusters on the grassy bank I took them to be some fallen berries: it was by mere chance that, taking one up to see of what kind it was, I discovered that it was of the very kind of which I was in pursuit—a beautiful fungus, about the size of a cherry, named the crimson mushroom (*Agaricus puniceus*). Taking all I could find, I proceeded triumphantly on my way, and soon found several other varieties; among which were the pretty 'parrot-coloured mushroom' (*A. psittacus*), a brilliant mixture of green and yellow, and also a lovely kind whose name I did not make out, with the centre of the cap pale-brown, shading through white into a delicate rose-tint at the edge, and about an inch and a half across the cap: only two specimens of this were to be found; but there were several varieties of the purest white, some like little cones of drifted snow; others much flatter; and some cup-like, and so delicate and fragile in texture that their snow-white caps were crushed into their black linings with a touch, leaving the fingers that had meddled with them deeply tinged with a soot-like stain. Then there were others of clear bright-yellow, and some of the tenderest lemon-tint, all elegantly formed; and most beautiful they looked—for I took home every one that was not too frail to be secured—when ranged around the central

mound of carmine and snow, and closely grouped on the pretty mossy carpet which I had provided for them.

From day to day I added to my collection. On one occasion I found on a fallen branch a cluster of a singular and beautiful kind, folded and lobed into convolutions something like the human brain, and of a rich orange colour: this I made out to be *Tremella mesenterica*. At another time I found a bunch of yellow things sticking up in the grass, and looking like short blades of grass painted a bright clear yellow: indeed it was long before I could satisfy myself that this colouring was not some insect or other deposit; nor was I quite clear on the point until I found some of the same substance only a little differently cleft, and white, and on referring to authorities found that such were described under the name of the brittle mushroom (*Clavaria fragilis*.) About this same time I perceived some brilliant orange balls—some larger and others smaller than a good-sized pea—floating on dead leaves in the dikes which intersected the marshy ground near the osmundia enclosure; and on fishing some out I saw that they were parasitic on the leaves that bore them, and of the fungus tribe. They were very pretty, and lasted a long time when floated in a glass of water; but I could not make sure of what kind they were. My plate of treasures was, when complete, very beautiful, and attracted much wonder and admiration. One lady to whom I shewed them conceived them to be artificial, and said: 'Yes, they are pretty. I know how you made that—pointing to one of shining yellow—'it is lemon-peel cut and varnished; but I do not know how you made the others.'

The kind of fungus most usually known and valued in England is the common field-mushroom (*Agaricus campestris*), which is also cultivated in gardens; the gills of this species are loose, pinky-red, changing to liver colour, and are in contact with the stem, but not united to it. The old writer whom I have before quoted, Gerarde, says of this mushroom: 'the lower side is somewhat hollow set, or decked with fine gutters drawn along from the middle centre to the circumference.' He also speaks of some sorts which 'grow upon the trunks or bodies of old trees, very much resembling *Auricula Iudea*; that is the Jewes-eare, doe in continuance of time grow unto the substance of wood which the Fowlers doe call touchwood.' There is another kind of fungus called puffe-fists, fusse-balls, bunt, puck-fist, frog-cheese, and other odd names, which is used for making a stupefying potion for bees. These grow to more than the size of a man's head; indeed it is said that they have been found measuring as much as nearly nine feet in circumference: this is, I believe, the *Bovista nigrescens*. They are white and heavy when unripe; but when ripe, very light, of a brown colour, and turning to powder. Cotton, in his Bee-book, tells us the mode of using this when it is desired to stupefy bees for the purpose of removing them from one hive to another. 'When you have procured one of those pucks, put it into a large paper, pressing it down therein to two-thirds, or near half the bulk, tying it up very close. Put it in an oven some time after the household bread is drawn, letting it continue all night. When it will hold fire it is fit for your use. With a pair of scissors cut a piece off the puck as large as a hen's egg (better at first to have too much than too little), and fix it to the end of a small stick, slit for that purpose, and sharpened at the other end; which place so that it may hang near the middle of an empty hive. This hive you must set with the mouth upward near the stock you intend to take, in a pail or bucket. This done set fire to the puck with a candle, and immediately place the stock of bees over it, tying a cloth round the hives, which you must have in readiness, that no smoke may come forth. In a minute's time or little more you will with delight hear them drop like hail into the empty

hive: when the major part of them are down, and you hear very few fall, you may beat the top of the hive gently with your hand, to get as many out as you can; then loosing the cloth, lift it off to a table or broad board prepared on purpose; and knocking the hive against it several times, many more will tumble out, perhaps the queen among them, as I have often found her lodging near the crown.'

In former days, when lucifer-matches were unknown, the country-people in divers parts of England who lived far from any neighbours used to carry these puffe-fists kindled with fire, which lasts long in them. I have named the truffle and morel as edible species—the former is the *Tuber cibarium*; they are found underground in dry and light soil, both in Europe and in Japan and India. Dogs are taught to find this fungus by smell, and to dig it out of the earth; and it is on record that a man was once known to possess this power. They are much famed in cookery, and are either boiled simply or stewed in different modes before being brought to table. The *Morel* (*morech'la esculen'ta*) grows on the earth, and has a round or oval cap: the German name is *Morechel*. It is large and whitish, and appears in the spring, when it is much valued, being very delicious for sauce. It is chiefly found in places where trees have been burned; 'which led,' says Loudon, 'in Germany to a practice of cutting down masses of forests for the sake of the future morels. This practice became so injurious that it was necessary to suppress it by law.' One of the prettiest and at the same time best known of the fungus tribe is that exquisite little red-cup which adorns our hedge-banks in the early spring-time—this is the *Hymenomycetes coccinea*, called by children fairy-cup, or sometimes fairies' bath. It appears at first as if growing on the earth, but on closer inspection you find it to be produced by some little dead stick which has lain mouldering in, or half below the surface of the earth all the winter, on which are clustered probably two or three little cups, from three-quarters of an inch to a barleycorn in diameter, of velvet softness, and the richest hue of scarlet in the inside, while the outside is of pinkish-white. With what delight have I seen these pretty things beaming out on me from some mossy bank in the month of March, and laid them in my little basket by the side of the first violets of the season, and perhaps two or three pale primroses—the result of patient searching among the leaves—and a few of the long tassels of the hazel—all tokens of the sweet spring, and all therefore precious jewels to one who loves the country, with its sweet sights and sounds. I do not know whether Queen Mab and her suite ever really use these pretty red things as baths; but that mushrooms were an important article in their domestic economy cannot be doubted if we accept the testimony furnished us by poets of all ages and of all countries: we may cite as an instance the fairy queen's song—'Come, follow, follow me,' &c. two of the stanzas of which are as follow:—

* Upon a mushroom's head
Our tablecloth we spread;
A grain of rye or wheat
The manchet which we eat;
Pearly drops of dew we drink
In acorn-cups filled to the brink.

On tops of dewy grasse
So nimblly do we passe,
The young and tender stalke
Ne'er bende where we do walke;
Yet in the morning may be seen
Where we the night before have been.

It is a pity that the lovers of romance and fairy lore can no longer wonder over those deep-green rings which mark the grass in the autumn, and amuse themselves

by fancying the elves and fairies dancing around hand in hand beneath the moonbeams : these rings, to which no doubt allusion is made in the last couplet of the song, as well as in Prospero's address—

* Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes, and groves,
And ye that on the sand with printless feet
Do chase the flying Neptune, and do fly him
When he comes back; you demi-puppets, that
By moonshine do the green sour ringlets make,
Whereof the ewe not bites; and you whose pastime
Is to make midnight mushrooms'—

are by late discoveries ascertained to be the result of the growth of some particular kinds of fungus, one of which is very broad and white, and called the gigantic mushroom (*Agaricus giganticus*). But I must now close these remarks, although my subject is not half exhausted ; urging my readers to examine for themselves, and assuring them that even a slight degree of study of fungi, will reveal to them wonders and beauties of which they may have been hitherto quite unconscious.

THE STRANGE BOAT.

LAST year, when engaged in an exploration of the Nile, it was my fortune to encounter a somewhat queer character. We had arrived at El-Kab, the site of the ancient Eileithyas, some short time after noon. The heat was intense ; and though all of us were pretty well inured to the temperature of Upper Egypt, it was judged both prudent and agreeable to defer our exploration until the evening drew nigh. We lay moored under a thick grove of palms alongside a tangled field of lupines, and could distinguish no sign of antiquities but portions of a huge wall of unburnt brick between the columnar stems of the trees. The silence peculiar to the summer-time of the day brooded over the scene ; for when the sun has retreated beyond the equator all the seasons are represented within the twenty-four hours in Egypt. The northern breeze had long since flagged, and now breathed in scarcely perceptible sighs along the eddying stream ; the leaves overhead occasionally trembled, but were voiceless ; the crew went out upon the bank, and were soon sleeping here and there among the lupines.

About an hour had passed since our arrival when we heard in the distance, borne towards us through the glowing air, the merry voices of a boat's crew evidently pulling down the stream ; and vigorously too, for in a minute or so after we first heard the indistinct and interrupted hum we could distinguish the air, and then even some of the words. Presently a small boat shot round a point into the centre of the reach, and the fast-dipping oars plied so bravely, that before we could make out the flag—no easy matter, for she came end on—there was a momentary lull in the singing ; after which we heard a rasping sound, that invariable sign of an in-shore movement—and the felucca, as our reis called the fairy-like craft, came shooting to its mooring-ground.

It belonged to an English traveller, who did not at first shew himself, probably from fear of exposing himself to our greetings. Vain fear, for though not unsocial ourselves, we respected the unsociality of others. Besides, we thought we recognized the boat ; and indeed there was no longer any possibility of doubt when we saw a tall, grim-looking dragoman make his appearance, and begin to operate upon some shirts. We had passed that boat fifty times on our way up, and on each occasion had beheld that identical dragoman engaged in that identical operation. It was indeed 'the enemy.' Not the evil one ; but a boat which, by its odd appearance, strange manoeuvres, and queer behaviour, had from the beginning puzzled, interested, and almost exasperated us. We had met it at first at Beni-Souef, where it had just arrived, seemingly with the intention

of stopping. No sooner, however, did we run up alongside, than the dragoman threw away his hot iron and began to give vociferous instructions to the captain to prepare for departure ; and off they went before we had driven in our pegs. We strolled about the town for an hour or so, and set sail. Our spread of canvas was immense, and our huge boat one of the finest models on the Nile. No wonder, then, that some time before sunset we overtook the stranger, which was better calculated for rowing than for sailing. The dragoman was still erect with his iron in his hand, and glanced at us moodily as we shot by ; but no sign of any travellers appeared. All the cabin-windows were jealously closed, and a curtain was drawn over the door. We began to speculate on what now seemed to be a little mysterious ; but could arrive at no definite result, except that the boat contained most probably a he-body and a she-body who chose to travel *incog.* The fag-end of the breeze took us about a mile ahead ; but after dark, when we had moored, we saw the mysterious stranger creep by, and rounding a point a little ahead, disappear.

Next morning, as soon as the wind served, we of course again gained on 'the enemy,' and this time, by the aid of our telescopes, managed to make out a European figure slowly pacing the roof of the cabin. But as we drew nigh it made itself scarce, and only the crew remained visible, with the exception of that abominable dragoman with his hot iron. Thus day after day passed ; we lying along-shore regularly at sunset, 'the enemy' working a couple of hours more, and crawling a mile or so ahead, to be repassed next morning under nearly the same circumstances. The only addition to our information was, that there was really a lady on board dressed in the Oriental style. This fact we first learned from our servants, but afterwards from our own observation ; and instead of appearing, it only served to stimulate our curiosity. However, we forbore to make inquiries, and endeavoured to escape from 'the enemy' ; but whatever distance we gained in the day was sure to be compensated by his industry at night.

On one occasion we had a slight communication with the mysterious boat. Somebody on board fell ill ; and a letter in a lady's hand, but with a male signature—a foreign name very like Alphonse de Penthiévre—was sent to us, half in French half in English, requesting some medicine. We supplied what we could, and recommended the unknown patient to push on to Minich, where there was a Frank doctor. Our advice was taken, and 'the enemy' set sail at night ; but a stiff breeze carried us ahead next day, and we had already visited the town when the little craft that had caused so much speculation came up with popping sail, and trembling under a heavy gale that began to blow as the sun went down.

This kind of work continued until we reached Thebes, where we stayed some time ; whilst the stranger, after a cursory glance that lasted three-quarters of an hour, went on. We never saw any more of it during our upward journey, nor indeed at Spoman—probably it went on to Abu Sumbal—and had quite forgotten its existence when it thus fell upon us at El-Kab. As may be supposed, our curiosity—which was by no means impertinent, for we declined allowing the servants to pump the ironing dragoman—now revived ; and when at length M. Alphonse de Penthiévre made his appearance, evidently bent on antiquarian research, I resolved to start with the most enterprising of my companions, in the vague hope of seeing something that would interest or amuse me.

He was a strange-looking being, strangely accoutred, this M. Alphonse. Tall and thin, he appeared like a mummy just escaped from a pit ; and his tight-fitting leathern breeches, long sporting-boots that reached half-way up his lank thighs, small braided jacket, and long-

peaked jockey-cap, converted into a turban by what might have been a lady's petticoat—all this, I say, gave him an original appearance quite irresistible to behold. We preferred walking, but M. Alphonse insisted on a donkey, and was presently ahead of us on the queerest little animal it is possible to conceive.

Our legs would have taken us much faster, but we paused to examine the ruins which the stranger passed by without so much as turning his head. These were an artificial lake, the infirm fragments of a temple, and two square enclosures, surrounded by walls some thirty feet thick. In the one nearest the river the peasants of the neighbourhood were hard at work removing the bricks to spread as manure over their fields. We could not but regret this destruction of antique remains; but our regrets were unavailing, and we felt confident then, as now, that no vigorous steps towards preserving the monuments of Egypt will be taken until they are scarcely worth preserving. Every year the mischief done is enormous, and seems to cause very little annoyance even to professed antiquaries. These gentlemen are generally so special in their studies, and so confined in their sympathies, that unless some particular tablet or some particular chamber in a temple that interests them be interfered with, they are perfectly content to allow hammer and pickaxe, spade and gunpowder, to work their will on the rest. Very little exertion would suffice to rescue what already remains from destruction; but, as we have said, this exertion will not be made until it is too late, and until there be nothing left in Egypt but chips and heaps of rubbish.

After strolling through these enormous enclosures we issued into the desert behind, and proceeded northward towards the solitary hill which formed the necropolis of ancient Eilithyia. Our friend 'the enemy' had not yet reached it, and we saw him at some distance from the base gesticulating most violently, and kicking his beast in the vain hope of accelerating its speed; whilst the Arab who had engaged himself as donkey-boy—he was an aged youth of some seventy-five years—was hobbling a hundred yards behind. We walked leisurely on, and arrived in time to witness M. Alphonse actually forcing his little donkey up the steep slope, and occasionally helping it by putting foot to ground on either side. Politeness induced us to resolve to wait until the operation was terminated; but when the animal came to a dead stop, in spite of the contortions of its rider, we began the ascent, and reached the entrance of the tombs, after having been favoured with a grave salute in passing from 'the enemy,' who did not appear to be aware that there was anything ludicrous in his appearance or situation.

We soon ran over the principal tombs which guide-books authorise us to pronounce interesting. They are small in themselves, but are connected by pits and rugged passages with very large unsculptured caves, which probably occupy the greater part of the space that was formerly one solid rock. The sculptures themselves are very curious and of high antiquity, but the state of their preservation is not at all satisfactory. They represent scenes of domestic and agricultural life in a very quaint and amusing manner, and throw great light on Egyptian customs. It is from them that a great portion of those valuable materials which have fed the imaginations of fervid archeologists has been derived. We, who looked calmly on, and had no theories to support, did not see so much as our predecessors; but we had double source of interest—the first, in the contemplation of the sculptures themselves; the second, in that of the ingenuity which has interpreted them.

M. Alphonse stalked solemnly past us several times during our examination, gazing with lack-lustre eye at the painted walls, and evidently going through his work as a mere matter of duty. We, not being in a hurry, after we had visited the numbered tombs, began

exploring the rest, and finally clambered up to the very summit of the hill, which is of an oval shape, and entirely honeycombed on all sides and to the very centre with excavations of all sizes. On the top we found the traces of various tombs, and towards the western extremity a neatly-cut staircase leading down to a platform upon which several chambers opened. Here we found M. Alphonse, with his legs hanging over a precipice, engaged in lighting a cigar, and thought it our duty to address a polite observation to him. He seemed rather shy at first, but answered in very vernacular English to the effect that Egypt was a 'very interesting country.'

There was now no mistaking the origin of 'the enemy.' Bow Bells had evidently filled his infant ears with their melody. But whence his uncouth appearance, his strange dress, and his outlandish name? Whence, above all, the Oriental lady who travelled in habara and veil, 'cabin'd, cribbed, confined' in a cockja, under the protection of this unmistakable Cockney? Our curiosity became keener than ever. We remembered having caught a partial glimpse of the countenance of the imprisoned lady as she returned with her lord from a sporting excursion, and that we thought it 'beautiful exceedingly'—full of poetical melancholy suggestive of a romantic story. It was impossible to resist the temptation to be a little inquisitive; so we began in a round-about manner, taking care to repeat the high-sounding name of our mysterious friend as often as possible, and observing that whenever it was pronounced he winced in a most remarkable manner. However, there was no extracting anything from him; and when, with a 'Good-morning, gents,' he leaped down the precipice and scrambled towards his little donkey, he left us as much in the dark as ever about his real condition and history.

We endeavoured philosophically to dismiss the subject from our minds, and pursued our investigations. We found, however, nothing but an interminable succession of cells, chambers, tombs, caves of various forms, but all evidently destined for sepulchral objects except one—a kind of underground chapel with round pillars. The place reminded me much of that Gebel el Monta, or Mountain of the Dead, which overhangs the city of Siwah in the Oasis of Jupiter Ammon; the plans even of many of the tombs seemed precisely similar.

In the valley below the hill was an isolated rock, with two or three excavated caves of very great antiquity. The lintels and jambs of the doorways were dimly ornamented with hieroglyphics; but very little could be made out. We returned by a path leading north of the great brick-enclosures, and noticed a curious kind of thorn, with contorted branches covered with prickles, said never to bear leaves, but producing a kind of red berry, some of which still remained, and were of an agreeable taste. On reaching the boat we found that 'the enemy' had already started, and heard the chanting of his crew in the distance. We also pushed off about dark; but although the men worked gallantly, it was impossible for our immense galley, so swift under sail, to keep up with the light boat of 'the enemy' when oars were brought into play. We never saw anything more of it.

Some months passed before we ascertained the real state of the case; and it was rather with a feeling of disappointment that we learned that M. Alphonse de Penthièvre was no other than Mr Jones, ironmonger of — Street, London; and that the Oriental lady, so jealously concealed from view, and whom we took to be some very immoral heroine, was actually Mrs Jones herself, lately extracted from a boarding-school at Clapham. It appears that this young lady, as soon as the honeymoon was over, felt disgusted both with the humdrum life of the capital and the very unpoetical

name for which she had exchanged her own musical family appellation of Higgins. So, her lord's means permitting, she resolved to travel under a title taken out of some one of her favourite novels; and the idea was carried out to the letter. She herself had a mania for 'adopting the customs of the countries through which she passed:' went out in a grisette's cap with flying ribbons at Paris; put a tower on her head in Normandy; donned the mantilla in Spain; and, finally, hid her delightful little face under a veil in Egypt and Syria. It is true that in this latter case she missed seeing a great deal of what was curious; but her object was not to see, but to satisfy her mania. A very harmless one it was, certainly, resulting in no other inconvenience than that of awaking the intense derision of all the people amongst whom she sojourned, and of giving rise to speculations of a nature not very flattering. It were to be desired that all travellers, in the indulgence of their eccentricities, should be satisfied with making themselves ridiculous.

THE POTTER OF TOURS.

AMONG the choicest works of art contributed to the Great Industrial Exhibition by our French neighbours, were some enamelled earthenware vases of remarkably fine workmanship, and particularly worthy of attention for their grotesque yet graceful decorations. These vases had, however, a still higher claim to distinction than that arising from their own intrinsic value, for they were the workmanship of one who may truly be ranked among 'nature's nobles,' although by birth and station owing no greater title than that of 'Charles Avisseau, the potter of Tours.'

A worthy successor of Bernard Palissy,* he has, like him, achieved the highest success in his art, in spite of difficulties which would have caused most other men to yield despairingly before what they would have deemed their untoward fate. Charles Avisseau was born at Tours on Christmas-day, in the year 1796. His father was a stone-cutter, but whenever labour was slack in that department, he sought additional occupation in a neighbouring pottery. While still a child, he used frequently to accompany his father to the factory. His eager attention was quickly attracted by the delicate workmanship of the painters in enamel, and before long he attempted to imitate their designs. The master of the factory observed some flowers and butterflies which he had sketched on a coarse earthenware vase, and at once perceiving that he gave promise of being a good workman, he engaged him in the service of the factory.

The boy now began to feel himself a man, and entered with his whole soul into his work. By the dim and uncertain light of the one lamp around which the Avisseau family gathered in the long winter evenings, Charles would spend hour after hour in tracing out new designs for the earthenware he was to paint on the morrow. He was at first too poor to purchase either pencil or paper, and used to manufacture from clay the best substitute he could for the former, while he generally employed the walls of the apartment as a substitute for the latter. He applied himself indefatigably to the study of every branch of his art—the different varieties of earths, the methods of baking them, the mode of producing various enamels, &c.—until, after some years of patient labour in the humble situation he had first occupied, he was offered the post of superintendent of the manufactory of fine porcelain at Beaumont-les-Hôtels. He was still, however, but a poor man; and, having married very young, was struggling with family cares and the trials of penury, when one day there fell into his hands an old enamelled earthenware vase,

which filled him with a transport of astonishment and delight. This was the *chef-d'œuvre* he had so often dreamed of, and longed to accomplish; the colours were fired on the ware without the aid of the white glaze, and the effect was exquisite.

'Whose work is this masterpiece?' inquired the young man.

'That of Bernard Palissy,' was the reply; 'a humble potter by birth. He lived at Saintes three centuries ago, and carried with him to the grave the secret of the means by which his beautiful enamels were produced.'

'Well, then,' thought Avisseau, 'I will rediscover this great secret. If he was a potter like me, why should not I become an artist like him?'

From that hour forward he devoted himself with the most unwearied perseverance to his great pursuit. He passed whole nights over the furnace; and although ignorant of chemistry, and destitute of resources, instruments, or books, he tried one experiment after another, in hopes of at length attaining the much-desired object. His neighbours called him a madman and a fool; his wife, too gentle to complain, often looked on with sad and anxious eye as she saw their scanty resources diminishing day by day—wasted, as she conceived, in vain and fruitless experiments. All his hopes seemed doomed to disappointment, and destitution stared him in the face; yet one more trial he determined to make, although that one he promised should be the last. With the utmost care he blended the materials of his recomposed enamel, and applied them to the ware, previous to placing it in the oven. But who can describe the deep anxiety of the ensuing hour, the hour on which the fondly-cherished hopes of a lifetime seemed to hang? At length with beating heart and trembling hand he opened the furnace: his ware was duly baked, and the colours of his enamel had undergone no change! This was a sufficient reward for all his labours; and even to this day Avisseau can never speak of that moment without the deepest emotion.

But his was not a mind to rest contented with what he had already achieved: he longed still further to perfect his art. He accordingly gave up his situation in the factory, and opened a shop in Tours, where he earned his livelihood by selling little earthenware figures, ornaments for churches, &c., whilst he passed his nights in study and in making renewed experiments. He borrowed treatises on chemistry, botany, and mineralogy; studied plants, insects, and reptiles; and succeeded at last in composing a series of colours which were all fusible at the same temperature. One more step remained to be achieved: he wished to introduce gold among his enamel; but, alas! he was a poor man, too poor to buy even the smallest piece of that precious metal. For many a weary day and night this thought troubled him. Let us transport ourselves for a few moments to the interior of his lowly dwelling, and see how this difficulty too was overcome. It is a winter's evening; two men—Charles Avisseau and his son—are seated at a table in the centre of the room; they have worked hard all day, but are not the less intent upon their present occupation—that of moulding a vase of graceful and classic form. Under their direction, two young sisters are engaged in tracing the veins upon some vine-leaves which had recently been modelled by the artists; while the mother of the family, seated by the chimney-corner, is employed in grinding the colours for her husband's enamels. Her countenance expresses a peaceful gravity, although every now and then she might be perceived to direct an anxious and inquiring glance towards her goodman, who seemed to be this evening even more than usually pensive. At last he exclaimed, more as if speaking to himself than addressing his observation to others:

'Oh, what would I not give to be able to procure the smallest piece of gold!'

* For a sketch of the history of this remarkable man, see No. 225 of this Journal.

'You want gold!' quietly inquired his wife: 'here is my wedding-ring: if it can help to make you happy, what better use can I put it to? Take it, my husband! God's blessing rests upon it.' So saying, she placed the long-treasured pledge in Avisseau's hand. He gazed upon it with deep emotion: how many were the associations connected with that little circlet of gold—the pledge of his union with one who had cheered him in his sorrows, assisted him in his labours, and aided him in his struggles! And, besides, would it not be cruel to accept from her so great a sacrifice? On the other hand, however, the temptation was strong; he had so longed to perform this experiment! If it succeeded, it would add so much to the beauty of his enamel: he knew not what to do. At length, hardly rising from his seat, he left the house. He still retained the ring in his hand: a great struggle was going on in his mind; but each moment the temptation to make the long-desired experiment gained strength in his mind, until at last the desire proved irresistible. He hurried to the furnace, dropped the precious metal into the crucible, applied it to the ware, which he then placed in the oven, and, after a night of anxious watching, held in his hand a cup, such as he had so long desired to see, ornamented with gilt enamel! His wife smiled as she gazed upon it, although at the same time a tear glistened in her eye; and looking proudly upon her husband, she exclaimed: 'My wedding-ring has not been thrown away!'

Still, Avisseau, notwithstanding his genius, was destined to lead for many years a life of poverty and obscurity. It was not until the year 1845 that M. Charles Sciller, a barrister at Tours, first drew attention to the great merit of some of the pieces he had executed, and persuaded him to exhibit them at Angers, Poitiers, and Paris. The attention of the public once directed towards his works, orders began to flow in upon him apace. The President of the Republic and the Princess Matilda Bonaparte are among his patrons, and the most distinguished artists and public men of the day are frequently to be met with in his *atelier*. In the midst of all this unlooked-for success, Avisseau has ever maintained the modest dignity of his character.

M. Brongniart, the influential director of the great porcelain manufactory at Sévres, begged of him to remove thither, promising him a liberal salary if he would work for the Sévres Company, and impart to them his secrets. 'I thank you for your kindness, sir,' replied the potter of Tours, 'and I feel you are doing me a great honour; but I would rather eat my dry crust here as an artisan than live as an artist on the fat of the land at Sévres. Here I am free, and my own master: *there* I should be the property of another, and that would never suit me.'

When he was preparing his magnificent vase for the Exhibition, he was advised to emboss it with the royal arms of England. 'No,' he replied, 'I will not do that. If Her Majesty were then to purchase my work, people might imagine I had ornamented it with these insignia in order to obtain her favour, and I have never yet solicited the favour of any human being!' Avisseau has no ambition to become a rich man. He shrinks from the busy turmoil of life—loving his art for its own sake, and delighting in a life of meditative retirement, which enables him to mature his ideas, and to execute them with due deliberation.

In the swamps and in the meadows he studies the varied forms and habits of reptiles, insects, and fish, until he succeeds in reproducing them so truly to the life that one can almost fancy he sees them winding themselves around the rushes, or gliding beneath the shelter of the spreading water-leaves. His humble dwelling, situated in one of the faubourgs of Tours, is well worthy of a visit. Here he and his son—now twenty years of age, who promises to prove in every respect a worthy successor to his father—may be found

at all hours of the day labouring with unremitting diligence. A room on the ground-floor forms the artist's studio and museum: its walls are hung with cages, in which are contained a numerous family of frogs, snakes, lizards, caterpillars, &c., which are intended to serve as models; rough sketches, broken busts, half-finished vases, lie scattered around. The furnaces are constructed in a little shed in the garden, and one of them has been half-demolished, in order to render it capable of admitting the gigantic vase which Avisseau has sent to the Great Exhibition. There we trust the successor of Bernard Palissy will meet with the success so justly due to his unassuming merit, and to the persevering genius which carried him onwards to his goal in the midst of so much to discourage, and with so little help to speed him on his way.

'A LOST ART.'

In No. 407 of this Journal there is an article entitled 'A Lost Art,' in which is mentioned the juggling trick of swallowing water, and then vomiting it again under the semblance of wine, &c. On reading it I remembered having read an explanation of this feat somewhere, and on examination found an account of it in an intelligent little book for its time, 'Experimental Philosophy, by Henry Power, Doctor of Physick. London, 1664.' His account, after describing the changes produced in vegetable infusions by acids, &c. is as follows:—'By which ingenious commixtion of spirits and liquors did Floran Marchand, that famous water-drinker, exhibit those rare tricks and curiosities at London of vomiting all kind of liquors at his mouth. For, first, before he mounts the stage, he always drinks in his private chamber, fasting, a gill of the decoction of Brasil; then, making his appearance, he presents you with a paifil of lukewarm water, and twelve or thirteen glasses, some washed in vinegar, others with oyl of tartar and oyl of vitriol; then he drinks four-and-twenty glasses of the water, and carefully taking up the glasse which was washed with oyl of tartar, he vomits a reddish liquor into it, which presently is brightned up and tinged into perfect and lovely claret. After this first assay, he drinks six or seven glasses more (the better to provoke his vomiting), as also the more to dilute and empale the Brasil decoction within him; and then he takes a glass rinsed in vinegar, and vomits it full, which instantly, by its acidity, is transcoloured into English beer, and vomiting also at the same time into another glass—which he washes in fair water—he presents the spectators with a glass of paler claret or Burgundian wine; then drinking again as before, he picks out the glass washed with oyl of vitriol, and, vomiting a faint Brasil-water into it, it presently appears to be sack—and perchance if he washed the one half of the glass with spirit of sack, it would have a faint odour and flavour of that wine also. He then begins his carouse again, and drinking fifteen or sixteen glasses, till he has almost extinguished the strength and tincture of his Brasil-water; he then vomits into a vinegar-glass again, and that presents white wine. At the next disgorgement—when his stomach is full of nothing but clear water, indeed, which he has filled so by the exceeding quantity of water which at every interval he drinks—he then deludes the spectators by vomiting rose-water, angelica-water, and cinnamon-water, into those glasses which have been formerly washed with those spirits. And thus was that famous cheat performed, and indeed acted with such a port and flowing grace by that Italian bravado, that he did not only strike an admiration into vulgar heads and common spectators, but even into the judicious and more knowing part of men, who could not readily find out the ingenuity of his knavery.' From this it would appear that the method used was the same with that of the Wizards of the present day; with this difference—that, in accordance with the tastes of a ruder age, they formerly used their stomachs as receptacles for the liquor, whereas in the present more fastidious age

they are contented with a bottle. The art of vomiting and spouting the water would of course require considerable practice, and I should think would not be very conducive to the health of the operators.—*From a Correspondent.*

EPI THALAMIA.

FOR A SISTER'S WEDDING. BY W. E. L.

I.

O DAY half happiness, half mystery !
O hour of gladness, long'd and waited for,
When hope and love-born fancy are no more,
But dreamland changes to reality !
How shall I welcome thee !—the silent hours
Are rolling upward on the orb of Time
Into the daylight, and the morning rime
Rises already on the orange-flowers.
Sweet sister bride ! from true affection sprung,
My thoughts this day to thee I dedicate ;
Would that, so large a theme to celebrate,
Some voice, melodious more than mine, had sung !
Yet take the rhymes, of imperfections full :
Like the lone blossoms of the Alpine snow,
They speak of summer warmth hid deep below,
And, to a cold world, preach the Beautiful.

II.

There is no thought can sweep across the mind
With more of melting tenderness and grace,
Than old remembrances of some lov'd place
With memories of lov'd persons intertwined.
Thus, sister mine, how many a summer hence
The vision of that shelter'd southern vale
(Let but the hint suffice to tell the tale),
Shall beam on thee with bright pre-eminence !
Through the dim lapse of years, as through a dream,
Shall bloom far off a lowly garden-home,
And fancy paint a happy pair that climb
Up the hillside, or wander'd by the stream ;
Or, 'mid deep copes hidden, watched afar
The fading landscape till the shadows fell,
And down the steep, and through the quiet dell,
Homeward they went, beneath the evening-star.

III.

O coming Time ! O messenger of light
Sent from God's fathomless futurity
To gleam upon the infinite To Be,
And clear the tangl'd mesh of wrong and right,
Tarry not longer ! from thy hiding-place
Let the fresh Present and its pure day-spring,
Lure the clogg'd pinion of thy sluggish wing ;
O let us see and know their face to face !'
Frail thought of vanity ! to weakly Sense
How should eternal wisdom deign reply ?
Only the echo of my spirit's sigh
Mocks at me with my own mad eloquence.
And it is well : we know not what we pray.
Nathless how trancing were the golden light
Of coming action to this panting sight,
Dimm'd in this dusky prison-house of clay !
For thee, O sister lov'd and cherish'd well !
Would I might trace for thee the unknown tale
Whose end is hidden 'neath Time's solemn veil,
Whose prelude is the chiming marriage-bell.
Ah, that I cannot ! ah, that I am dust !
But He who lives while ages roll away,
Perfect and Present, the I AM for aye—
He never fails to love. In Him I trust.
So may the incense of a brother's heart
That rises to the ear which heareth prayer,
Not pass unfruitful into careless air,
Fragrant and precious only to depart ;

Rather, returning from the throne above
Fraught with choice blessing, let each prayer be
given,
And faith be born, and trustfulness in Heaven,
Strong as man's friendship, warm as woman's love.

IV.

Yet do I err, denying that we know
What shall befall us : darkness is no more
Beyond the threshold of this mortal shore,
And doubt but shadows things that are below.
Night is around us ; and we cannot see
Things that are earthly for the earthly night,
But clear the vision of the worlds of light
Shining far off from earth's obscurity.

Yea, though to-morrow's fleeting joy or pain
Be shrouded from us in a rayless gloom,
Bright gleams, ayont the portals of the tomb,
The chart of that fair land we seek to gain.

If all unwittingly I do thee wrong—
If, rhyming freely, I have thrill'd some chords
Of too deep feeling with my careless words,
Pardon the folly of a true-meant song.

Think that all error springs from warm good-will ;
Treasure the good, despite its harsh, quaint dress ;
Steep all the ill in deep forgetfulness ;
Forgive the song, and love the singer still.

GOLD DISCOVERIES.

As indicative of the change caused by the gold discoveries on the aspect of affairs in the colony, we may only present the following passages from the 'Sydney Herald' of May 28 :—'Compared with 1843, when the colony was at the lowest depth of its prostration, the early months of 1851 were as the light of noon compared with the blackness of midnight, or as the serenity of an Australian spring with the horrors of an arctic winter. But if we attempt to compare the first four months of the present year, when Australian gold was a thing unthought of, with the last two weeks of the current month of May, when Australian gold is the *only* thing thought of, we shall be at a loss for any metaphor that can adequately illustrate the stupendous change. If we were to say that the colony has been panic-stricken—that the whole population has gone mad, we should use a bold figure of speech, but not much too bold to indicate the fact. It is as if the Genius of Australia had suddenly rushed from the skies, and proclaimed through a trumpet, whose strains reverberate from mountain to mountain—from valley to valley—from town to town—from house to house—piercing every ear and thrilling every breast : "The destinies of the land are changed !",'

THE BROOM.

There are many pleasing associations that the 'lang yellow broom' awaken in the mind ; but to the lover of Flora, perhaps one of the dearest is the remembrance that the gorgeous luxuriance of its golden blossoms so enraptured the illustrious Linnaeus, when he first beheld it in *profusion*, on his visit to England, that he fell down upon his knees in an ecstasy of pleasure, to enjoy such a glorious sight. And as the mind of that eminent naturalist was endowed with a deep sense of the goodness of his Creator, we cannot doubt but that he then breathed a prayer of gratitude to the benevolent Being who had furnished him with the gratifying spectacle.—*Gardiner's Flora of Forfarshire.*

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